

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02730 01 OF 02 031637Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8970

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 2730

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT ZA

SUBJ: FIRST REACTIONS TO NEW PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

1. SUMMARY: THE ENTRANCE OF FORMER UPP LEADER SIMON KAPWEPWE, FORMER ANC CHIEF HARRY NKUMBULA AND LUSAKA BUSINESSMAN ROBERT CHILUWE INTO THE ZAMBIAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION SWEEPSTAKES HAS RAISED THE SPECTRE OF THE SAME OPEN DISUNITY AND POLITICAL IN-FIGHTING

THE GOVERNMENT HAD SOUGHT TO SUPPRESS IN 1973 WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF A ONE-PARTY DEMOCRACY. THE CANDIDATES, SPECIFICALLY KAPWEPWE, MAY HAVE TRIGGERED WHAT COULD BECOME A WIDE-RANGING DEBATE ON ECONOMIC ILLS, THE RHODESIAN BORDER, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, AND THE NATURE OF UNIP ITSELF. PARTY LEADERS ARE CHARGING KAPWEPWE WITH OPPOSING OFFICIAL UNIP POLICIES AND ENCOURAGING TRIBALISM. CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS APPEAR DIVIDED OVER THE ISSUE OF HOW FAR THE CHALLENGERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE THEIR NOMINATION BIDS, BUT THEY HAVE ADOPTED A SEEMINGLY UNITED POSITION ON PORTRAYING THE THREE AS EXTERNAL TROUBLEMAKERS. THE INTRA-PARTY CAMPAIGN SEASON WILL CULMINATE NEXT MONTH IN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, WHICH IS MANDATED TO SELECT A SINGLE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE FOR PRESENTATION TO THE ELECTORATE IN THE FALL GENERAL ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

2. ZAMBIA'S TWO NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS TODAY FEATURED PROMINENT ARTICLES, COMMENTARIES AND EDITORIALS FOCUSING ON THE ENTRANCE OF

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 02730 01 OF 02 031637Z

FORMER UPP LEADER SIMON KAPWEPWE, FORMER ANC CHIEF HARRY NKUMBULA, AND LUSAKA BUSINESSMAN ROBERT CHILUWE INTO THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION RACE. CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER REUBEN KAMANGA WAS REPORTED AS WARNING THAT THE UNIP NATIONAL COUNCIL MUST APPROVE ANY CANDIDATES THAT RUN FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION IN SEPTEMBER'S GENERAL CONFERENCE. IN JUNE, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S CHIEF ELECTION STRATEGIST, BOB LITANA, HAD DECLARED THAT A NATIONAL COUNCIL EN-

DORSEMENT DOES NOT EXCLUDE OTHERS FROM RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO BACK KAUNDA AS THE LEADERSHIP'S SOLE CANDIDATE, BUT ANOTHER MEETING IS TO BE HELD LATER THIS MONTH. ITS ORIGINAL MEETING DATE OF AUGUST

4

WAS RECENTLY CANCELLED WITHOUT EXPLANATION. SHOULD THE THREE CANDIDATES NOT RECEIVE THE GO-AHEAD FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL, IT IS UNCLEAR HOW THEY WOULD BE CONSTITUTIONALLY ABLE TO BRING THEIR CAMPAIGNS TO THE 5000-DELEGATE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

3. OTHER STATEMENTS ISSUED AROUND THE COUNTRY ATTACKED KAPWEPWE FOR HAVING VIOLATED HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS A UNIP MEMBER. THE FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT'S DEROGATORY COMMENTS ON THE PARTY'S PHILOSOPHY OF HUMANISM, AS WELL AS HIS PROPOSALS FOR OPENING THE RHODESIAN BORDER AND SUPPORTING FREE ENTERPRISE, LEAD COPPERBELT CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER SHADRACK SOKO TO CHARGE THAT KAPWEPWE "DOES NOT SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF UNIP." ANOTHER CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER ACCUSED HIM OF BEING A "CAPITALIST AGENT" WHILE KAMANGA WARNED THE FORMER UPP LEADER NOT TO ACT "AS IF HE IS SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ANOTHER PARTY." A ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL COMMENTARY ASKED WHETHER MEN WHO OPPOSE UNIP POLICIES SHOULD BE ENTITLED TO RUN FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION. IN AN EFFORT TO LOWER THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE, KAMANGA IS URGING UNIP LEADERS NOT TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON THE MATTER. "THERE IS NOTHING TO PANIC ABOUT," HE SAID YESTERDAY IN THE PARTY'S LUSAKA HEADQUARTERS.

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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 02730 01 OF 02 031637Z

4. THE NEW CANDIDACIES OPENED OLD CHARGES OF DIVISIVENESS. KAPWEPWE'S REPUTATION AS A BEMBA LEADER PROMPTED THE GOVERNOR OF NDOLA TO OBSERVE THAT THE BEMBA PEOPLE WILL NOW BE ACCUSED OF TRYING TO "FORM A TRIBAL GOVERNMENT." THE ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL COMPLAINED THAT THE THREE CANDIDATES MAY BE USHERING IN "ANOTHER ERA OF INTER-PARTY FIGHTS" DESPITE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A ONE-PARTY DEMOCRACY IN 1973. ONE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OFFICIAL REVEALED THAT HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAD UNANIMOUSLY RESISTED THE REINTEGRATION OF FORMER UPP LEADERS INTO UNIP UNTIL PRESIDENT KAUNDA HAD INSISTED UPON THE MOVE. "WE ACCEPTED WITH RESERVATIONS BECAUSE WE KNEW KAPWEPWE

WAS UP TO SOMETHING WHICH HAS NOW BEEN PROVEN."

5. PRESIDENTIAL COMPETITION HAS ALSO FUELED THE ON-GOING DEBATE ABOUT THE EXTENT OF PRESS FREEDOM. A ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL EDITORIAL CLAIMED THAT IT HAD GONE "OUT OF ITS WAY" TO PUBLICIZE THE STATEMENTS OF THE THREE CHALLENGERS, SOMETHING WHICH MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN DONE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. (THE MAIL DID NOT MENTION ITS PREVIOUS NEWS BLACKOUT ON CHILUWE'S CANDIDACY.) BUT THE PAPER ADDED THAT SINCE KAUNDA HAD ALREADY RECEIVED THE ENDORSEMENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL, "THE PRESS, THE RADIO AND INFORMATION AND TELEVISION ARE

VERY MUCH UNDER ORDERS TO GIVE THE SOLE PARTY CANDIDATE ALL THE SUPPORT HE NEEDS FROM NOW ON UNTIL THE PARTY GENERAL CONFERENCE DECIDES OTHERWISE."

6. COMMENT: THE UNIP LEADERSHIP APPEARS SPLIT ON HOW FAR THE THREE PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANTS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO GO IN SEEKING THE NOMINATION. BOB LITANA'S JUNE DECLARATION THAT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL'S ENDORSEMENT OF KAUNDA DID NOT EXCLUDE OTHERS FROM RUNNING FOR THE PRESIDENCY AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE SEEMS TO CONTRADICT KAMANGA'S STATEMENT THAT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MAY ONLY CONSIDER THOSE CANDIDATES APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL. THE CAMPAIGN SEASON'S SECOND NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD LATER THIS MONTH MAY CLARIFY THE ISSUE.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 LUSAKA 02730 01 OF 02 031637Z

7. THE PARTY DOES SEEM TO BE UNITED IN TRYING TO PORTRAY THE CANDIDATES AS BOTH DETRIMENTAL TO NATIONAL UNITY AND AS EXTERNAL CHALLENGES TO UNIP. FEW ARE READY TO TREAT THE THREE AS LEGITIMATE IN-PARTY CANDIDATES FOR LEADERSHIP, POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02730 02 OF 02 031629Z
ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 2730

NATURE OF KAPWEPWE'S REMARKS. INSTEAD, NEWSPAPER REPORTS CONVEY A SENSE OF FEAR THAT THE THREE WILL OPEN UP ALL THE OLD WOUNDS THAT WERE MEANT TO BE CLOSED BY THE ABOLITION OF MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM IN

1973. KAMANGA'S "DON'T PANIC" PLEA IS REVEALING IN THIS REGARD.

BUT THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO
A TEST OF THE FLEXIBILITY OF ZAMBIAN ONE-PARTY DEMOCRACY. UNIP
LEADERS AND THE PRESS SEEM CONCERNED ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH
PARTY POLICIES ARE DEBATABLE BY PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRANTS. OTHERS
APPEAR PLEASED THAT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES LONG SUBMERGED
IN UNIP RHETORIC HAVE COME INTO THE OPEN. UNLESS THE PARTY LEADER-
SHIP IS ABLE TO TONE DOWN THE EMERGING ATMOSPHERE OF CONFRONTA-
TION, THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AND THE PERIOD LEADING UP TO IT THREATEN
TO BE DISRUPTIVE.
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